
Evaluating the Basic Learning Competencies of Junior College Students

RR 00-18

Eunsang Cho
Jong-Hoon Kang

This study examines the basic learning competencies of junior college students and proposes methods for improving the lack of learning competencies. Major research methodologies included a review of the literature, data analysis, interviews with teachers, focus group meetings with experts, tests for language, math, and English, and surveys of both students and teachers.

The basic competencies were limited to language, mathematics and English. The test results show that 44% of students did not reach the minimum requirements for learning specialty courses in areas of language(Korean), 51% of students were below the minimum criterion in English, and 57% of students did not satisfy the minimum learning criterion in mathematics. In terms of academic areas, students from the nursing field had the highest scores, followed by those from the industrial and social fields; those from the arts had the lowest scores. By gender, female students had higher scores than male students. In terms of locality, junior college students located in cities had higher scores than those located in rural areas.

Regarding self-perception of learning competencies, only 21% of students responded that their level of competencies for language(Korean) were equal to that of freshmen. For English and mathematics, less than 10% of students

stated that their level of competencies equaled the level of freshmen. This trend is consistent with the self-perception of vocational high school students.

The request for curriculum improvement states that between 30% and 40% of students, and more than 60% of teachers, agreed with the statement that the contents of textbooks for language (Korean), mathematics, and English should be modified to match the level of the students. About 20-30% of students and 40% of teachers responded positively to the statement that textbooks should be written "more easily." Regarding the quantity of the textbooks, however, about 10% of students agreed to reducing it. There were conflicting opinions on the number of class hours for language, mathematics, and English, i.e., about 50% of students were opposed to increasing language class hours, while 25% of teachers affirmatively responded to increasing English class hours.

As educational improvement for basic learning competencies, a number of strategies are suggested. Development of a reliable and valid evaluation tool, selection of students below minimum requirements, and the creation of developmental materials for them are requested. In addition, joint training of professors in language, mathematics, and English, as well as specialty areas, is essential to developing more effective instructional and learning methods. Further, the graduation certification system may be supplemented to overcome the shortcomings of the current system, such as automatic graduation, and inhibitions on postponed graduation and class failure. Finally, the establishment of a learning center is essential to systematically devise, implement and evaluate the above-mentioned strategies.

Considering the limitations of this study, the following research tasks are suggested. First, as this research failed to guarantee a representative sample of all colleges, it is difficult to generalize the results to all junior/community colleges. For future research, therefore, it is important to obtain a representative

sample through a stricter sampling. Second, an evaluation tool reflecting the characteristics of junior/community colleges needs to be developed so that curriculum improvements based on the results of student evaluation can be made. Third, the linkage between curriculum and basic competencies needs to be examined in order to develop a more appropriate curriculum and instructional methodology. Finally, a study linking learning competencies and specific courses needs to be conducted.(escho@krivet.re.kr)

The Development and Field Application of the Teaching-Learning Model in Vocational High Schools

RR 00-19

*Sookyoung Lee
Sookyoung Byun
Yoonhee Park*

I . Overview

This research proposes an appropriate 'teaching-learning' model for vocational high schools on the basis of the research results obtained by 'The field analysis of teaching-learning methods for vocational high schools'(1999), which focused on presenting the actual conditions and problems of teaching-learning methods in the vocational high schools.

The following steps were taken in order to establish the research objectives. First, domestic and overseas literary references and data were used to research changes in the teaching-learning paradigm, study the concept and feature of